

## **UST Program Task Force**

### **Draft Recommendations**

**TITLE: CLOSURE OF PRE-MTBE GASOLINE RELEASE CASES**

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#### **BACKGROUND:**

1. Petroleum based motor fuel is the most common substance stored in Underground Storage Tanks (USTs). Petroleum naturally attenuates and degrades in the subsurface, limiting the extent of petroleum groundwater plumes.
2. State Water Board Resolution 88-63 requires, with few exceptions, that all groundwater be designated as a source of drinking water.
3. State Water Board Resolution 92-49 requires that cleanup levels be no greater than water quality objectives, which are most commonly drinking water standards.
4. Methyl-tert Butyl Ether (MTBE) is a fuel oxygenate added to gasoline to reduce air pollution and increase octane ratings.
5. Widespread use of MTBE in California occurred in the early 1990's in response to the 1990 Federal Clean Air Act Amendments and the wintertime oxygenated fuels program implemented by the California Air Resources Board in 1992.
6. Pre-MTBE releases of gasoline are assumed to have occurred no later than 1992; a pre-MTBE release is a minimum of 17 years old.
7. Pre-MTBE formulations of gasoline are predominantly composed of relatively immobile compounds; plume lengths change slowly and tend to stabilize at relatively short distances from the fuel hydrocarbon release site.
8. A contaminant 'hot-spot' is characterized by localized groundwater impairment that has been laterally and vertically delineated to below water quality objectives and found to be stable

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The members of the UST Cleanup Task Force recommend that the State Water Board modify existing policies or regulations, or seek other remedies, to effect the following actions:

1. Pre-MTBE 'hot-spots' should be granted No Further Action status immediately irrespective of dissolved contaminant concentrations;

2. Pre-MTBE contaminated sites that are not delineated to below water quality objectives should be strongly considered for No Further Action status if the distance to the nearest receptor is greater than 500 feet;
3. The aforementioned recommendations do not eliminate the requirements that the responsible party remove free product to the maximum extent practicable as established under 40 CFR 280.64.